

Applicant: Pimentel et al.
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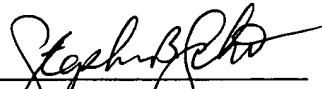
REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Specification, Drawings, and Claims have all been amended to conform the application to US practice. Claim 8 is added herewith.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application, including the claims, is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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[0001] PROCESS OF INERTIZATION (DAMPENING) OF STEEL MAKING
SLAG FOR ECONOMICAL REUSE

[0002] FIELD OF INVENTION

[0003] This invention refers to an economical process in which the steel slag can be reused, through inertization (aeration and hydration). Specifically, this invention refers to an improvement in the steel slag recycling.

[0004] BACKGROUND

[0005] The steel alloys' manufacturing processes are well known, as well as the inherent residue generation, like mud and slag, of which the steel slag can be evidenced. Its technical application and environmentally adequate solution is the objective of the development of this process.

[0006] Collection and storage of the steel slag creates various problems like handling, transportation, loading, unloading and stocking for the huge amounts of this material, each of them with its own structure for environmental protection, especially water contamination.

[0007] Having in mind the rigorous inspection of environment protection agencies and social and environmental consciousness, metallurgical industries began researches seeking not only to avoid environmental damage due to their residue, as well as promoting the correct technical employment of these materials, and even making some profit through the application in road paving with asphalt coating as a replacement for petroleum compounds.

[0008]_____The LD steel slag is obtained in the pig iron to steel transformation process, on LD type converters, in which the oxides formed during the oxygen blow combine themselves with the dissolved CaO and MgO, creating the slag that is steady (stable) and distinct from the molten bath.

[0009]_____The utilization of LD slag in road pavement is well known in many countries since decades ago, and the problems that may happen in the paving using this kind of slag are well known too. Being worth of note is the volumetric expansion caused mainly by the CaO and MgO that are free from the slag, causing ruptures in the asphalt or concrete covering.

[0010]_____The term cured steel slag, commonly refers to the slag which is free from the risk of expanding, once it has been stored for a minimum period of 6 months, despite some texts affirming that the slag has to be stored for 01 a minimum (one) year, or even 02 (two) years, to be considered cured. However, the time variable is no the only responsible factor for the stabilization of the slag. The agents that cause the stabilization of the slag is water and atmospheric air through hydration and ~~carbonation~~carbonation of the free CaO and MgO oxides, transforming them into stable hydrates and carbonates. Due to the hydraulic characteristics of the slag, rainwater, for instance, that falls on a pile of slag will react with the CaO and SiO₂ oxides, forming a film, obstructing, like this, the influx of water in the interior of the pile, slowing the curing process.

[0011]_____The difference between the cure conditions of the surface and the interior of the slag piles is one of the main factors that will result in problems in road paving, supposing, mistakenly, that the whole material is cured just for the fact of being stored for a minimum period of 06 months.

[0012]_____ Because of this problem, which has become a worldwide matter, some alternatives to eliminate the volumetric expansion of the steel slag have been developed, achieving the inertization of the slag.

[0013]_____ The most efficient solutions were identified in Europe and Japan, where volumetric expansion is reduced to near-zero levels. However, the cost benefit of these technologies was one of the responsible factors for making its access practically impossible in emerging economies.

[0014]_____ What follows is a summary of some of the known processes.

[0015]_____ KNOWN PROCESSES

[0016]_____ ---PROCESS: Increase of the fusible dissolution

[0017]_____ DESCRIPTION: Granulometry reduction

[0018]_____ MOMENT OF ACTUATION: Before generation

[0019]_____ STRONG POINTS: Low Cost

[0020]_____ WEAK POINTS: NIA

[0021]_____ EFFECTIVENESS (Amount of Expansion Reduction): Not defined

[0022]_____ ---PROCESS: Alteration of the slagging agent

[0023]_____ DESCRIPTION: Utilizing a synthetic material as fusible

[0024]_____ MOMENT OF ACTUATION: Before generation

[0025]_____ STRONG POINTS: Also increases the hydraulic activity of the slag

[0026]_____ WEAK POINTS: Does not change the free MgO ratio

[0027]_____ EFFECTIVENESS (Amount of Expansion Reduction): Low

[0028]_____ ---PROCESS: Silex and oxygen addition

[0029]_____ DESCRIPTION: Silex and oxygen addition to the liquid slag with a heat source

[0030]_____MOMENT OF ACTUATION: After the generation, with the slag in liquid state

[0031]_____STRONG POINTS: Reduction in the free CaO and MgO ratios below the 1 % level

[0032]_____WEAK POINTS: High Cost

[0033]_____EFFECTIVENESS (Amount of Expansion Reduction): Medium

[0034]_____---PROCESS: Granulation with water

[0035]_____DESCRIPTION: Abrupt cooling with water

[0036]_____MOMENT OF ACTUATION: After the generation, with the slag in liquid state

[0037]_____STRONG POINTS: Also increases the hydraulic activity of the slag

[0038]_____WEAK POINTS: Alteration in granulometry; drying needed; environmental problems

[0039]_____EFFECTIVENESS (Amount of Expansion Reduction): High

[0040]_____---PROCESS: Dry granulation

[0041]_____DESCRIPTION: Dry abrupt cooling

[0042]_____MOMENT OF ACTUATION: After the generation, with the slag in liquid state

[0043]_____STRONG POINTS: Also increases the hydraulic activity of the slag; simpler than granulation with water

[0044]_____WEAK POINTS: Alteration in granulometry

[0045]_____EFFECTIVENESS (Amount of Expansion Reduction): High

[0046]_____---PROCESS: Weathering

[0047]_____DESCRIPTION: Weather exposition - with occasional watering

[0048] _____MOMENT OF ACTUATION: After the generation, with the slag in solid state

[0049] _____STRONG POINTS: Low cost and simplicity

[0050] _____WEAK POINTS: Slow; Lacks a methodological definition, Heterogeneity

[0051] _____EFFECTIVENESS (Amount of Expansion Reduction): Variable

[0052] _____---PROCESS: Open yard steam cure

[0053] _____DESCRIPTION: Steam injection in the slag

[0054] _____MOMENT OF ACTUATION: After the Generation, with the slag in solid state

[0055] _____STRONG POINTS: Considerable reduction in free Cao and MgO ratios

[0056] _____WEAK POINTS: High cost, particularly if there is no steam tubing available

[0057] _____EFFECTIVENESS (Amount of Expansion Reduction): High

[0058] _____---PROCESS: SKAP steam cure

[0059] _____DESCRIPTION: Steam injection in the slag on a sterilizer

[0060] _____MOMENT OF ACTUATION: After the Generation, with the slag in solid state

[0061] _____STRONG POINTS: Considerable reduction in free CaO and MgO ratios

[0062] _____WEAK POINTS: High cost

[0063] _____EFFECTIVENESS (Amount of Expansion Reduction): Very high

[0064] _____SUMMARY

[0065] _____The Economic Reuse of the Steel Slag through its inertization (aeration and ~~hydration~~hydration), is the result of researches and tests on experimental lots of LD slag, making possible the inertization of this slag, as well as its reuse on road paving, now that its volumetric expansion is reduced to levels that do not compromise the structure and quality of these pavements.

[0066] BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING(S)

[0067] Figure A is a photograph showing a ruptured asphalt layer used in the Prior Art.

[0068] Figure B is a photograph of an asphalt layer that used the present process.

[0069] Figure C is a table and graph showing an acceptance analysis.

[0070] DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT(S)

[0071] To make the process of economical reuse of steel slag through its inertization (aeration and ~~hydratation~~hydration) better visualized, two photographs are attached to this report through Figure 01. The first (A), shows a ruptured layer of asphalt because of the use of unprocessed slag, and on the second (B) shows an asphaltic layer applied over the steel slag that was inertized through the present process.

[0072] The Economic Reuse of the Steel Slag through its inertization (aeration and ~~hydratation~~hydration) begins after the definition of an area to receive the slag, being prepared through topographical instructions that allow the proposed process to be carried out.

[0073] After the area is defined and adapted, it will be called inertization yard, where starts the process of unloading the slag, which will be laid through trucks and, later, through specific equipment, and distributed in homogenous way over the area until the previously defined thickness is achieved all over the area.

[0074] With the inertization yard prepared, the slag is ready to go through the process of aeration, process that starts with the movement of the slag with a leveling

is indicated, as well as specific factors for acceptance analysis of a particular material lot (according to the example below). See Figure C).

~~[TABLE AND GRAPHS]~~

[0080]_____ For the residual volumetric expansion verification of the inertized product, the chosen method is the "PTM-130", that was developed Pennsylvania Transportation Department (USA) and adapted by the Minas Gerais Highway Department DER/MG).

[0081]_____ Besides the volumetric expansion test, it is necessary to verify the granulometry, the density, the ideal humidity and the California Support Index, vital evaluation characteristics of the aggregates to be used in the execution base and sub-base for road pavements.

[0082]_____ With the process of Economic Reuse of the Steel Slag through its inertization (aeration and ~~hydratation~~hydration), the LD steel slag, that has been adequately enhanced and submitted to the inertization process accordingly to the quality control criteria described above, can be used as aggregate in the execution of road work, as base and sub-base pavement element, as well as aggregate for asphaltic concrete.

* * *

machine, a plough, a bulldozer or any other equipment capable of promoting the aeration of this material through its mixture, causing, subsequently, the acceleration of the ~~carbonation~~carbonation of the free magnesium and calcium oxides existing in the slag, increasing the slag's contact with atmospheric air.

[0075]_____ After the initial movement of the material laid in this yard, representative samples of the lot are taken for volumetric expansion level (initial volumetric expansion) analysis.

[0076]_____ Simultaneously to the aeration process, the ~~hydration~~hydration process is done, through water aspersion with a water truck, or aspersers installed on the inertization yard, arranged in a way so that all the slag is reached, accelerating the hydration reactions of the oxides contained in the slag, especially the free magnesium and calcium oxides, which are the main responsible for the volumetric expansion of the slag.

[0077]_____ These procedures are done daily, until the soil laboratory, responsible for the expansion level analysis, decides to halt the ~~work~~work, based on the periodic analysis of the volumetric expansion level of the slag lot being processed.

[0078]_____ The water volume to be used during the inertization process will depend on the characteristic of each slag lot submitted to the process, once this characteristic depends on the type of produced steel, as well as other factors.

[0079]_____ The ending of the inertization process of a certain lot of slag follows the control and quality criteria defined by the appropriate road standards, DNER-ES-301197 AND DNER-ES-303197 standards, on which the necessary amount of samples